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NEWS CONFERENCE

#152

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JODY POWELL

AT 11:49 A.M. EDT

SEPTEMBER 7, 1977

WEDNESDAY

Q Jody, I have been on vacation. Is there anything new going on at the OMB?

MR. POWELL: It has been pretty quiet, Deakin. In fact, it has been so quiet that -- (Laughter) --

I have one announcement to make today. The Administration is resubmitting its proposed sale of seven AWACS aircraft to Iran. As you know, the President has previously and does again today indicate his strong support for that sale to the Members of Congress.

The President wishes to stress that Iran is a nation of importance to U. S. interests, given its geographic location; its historic cooperation with us on a broad range of international issues; its importance as a secure source of oil, not only for ourselves and Western Europe and Japan, but also for Israel; and its quiet and public cooperation with us.

As you know, the previous request was withdrawn so that several questions submitted by the Congress could be dealt with. We believe that the assurances presented to the Congress by the President respond to the concerns that were raised earlier by various interests.

The Iranian Government has specifically endorsed these assurances. Many of them relate to security matters. Specifically, we will not be providing in these aircraft the most sensitive subsystems. We will take steps to make sure that the number of persons in Iran involved in this program is held to a minimum; that their participation in training flights is carefully controlled and that they will not fly on operational missions.

Q You mean the Americans will not?